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CONTACT: Ken Taylor, Executive Director
ktaylor@kidsforward.org

Extending “Safer at Home” is the Right Thing for Wisconsin’s Health

MADISON, WI – Governor Evers is right to extend the Safer at Home Order to protect the lives of the people of Wisconsin. The total number of infections and deaths in Wisconsin is much lower than it would have been without the order, and it is premature to change tactics now without additional measures being in place to keep Wisconsinites safe.

Rather than fighting the order in court, it would be much better for the health of Wisconsinites if politicians set aside political bickering and worked in a bi-partisan way to put the measures in place that are widely agreed to be needed to more safely ease restrictions and re-open the economy. If that is not done, there will likely be a resurgence of the virus, more people will die, and we will need to go back to more drastic restrictions again.

There is a lot we still don’t know about this virus, there is a great deal of research and testing needed to develop a vaccine and effective treatments. But there are three things that there is wide consensus about as necessary steps to ease restrictions: sufficient testing, rapid analysis of the tests, and strong contact tracing. These are necessary so when there is a resurgence due to easing restrictions we can quickly work out where the virus is, who is most at risk, and respond in a more flexible and precise way.

The challenge now for state lawmakers is to work together to enable the state and local public health system to have the resources needed to accomplish those prerequisites for lifting the Stay at Home Order. That will require significant funding because investments in public health in our state have substantially declined over the past decade, and we now rank 46th in the nation in public health spending per person. Only if lawmakers of both parties work together to vastly improve our public health infrastructure can we both slow the spread of the Coronavirus and re-open the economy.

Social distancing and these restrictions are painful, but they are necessary, and they are working. We need to continue listening to the science, medical, and public health experts.

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Kids Forward, formerly the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, advocates for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families in Wisconsin. Using research and a community-informed approach, Kids Forward works to help every kid, every family, and every community thrive.